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"Look at Scotland! See her enviable state with regard to her Poor! That country is the theme of panegyric "amongst all who have visited her, on account of the situation of her labouring classes. The Poor-Laws "are almost totally in disuse, and all is regularity and order! What was the day-star which shone forth "and calmed her troubles? Education. Such was the effect of Education upon Scotland, and I will "prove to you that that effect was produced by Education alone."—— Mr. Whitbread's Speech on the Poor Laws Bill. PARL. DEBATES, Vol. 8, p. 879.

SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

POOR LAWS (continued from page 338). ——When, at the page, here referred to, I made some observations upon the unjust reflection, which, in the preamble to his bill for the education of the poor of England, Mr. Whitbread had thrown upon this country, I was pretty certain, that those remarks would not be long without calling forth the animadversions of some Scotch correspondent; for, an ardent zeal on the side of their own particular part of the kingdom is one of the laudable characteristics of the inhabitants to the north of the Tweed. My expectations were not disappointed. A letter, which will be found immediately after this Summary, will shew the reader, that what I said has been felt, and that it has kindled some little anger. The writer does, indeed, throw out a sort of *threat*, that, unless I insert his letter, he will cause it to be inserted elsewhere, a threat which has made me balance for some time, whether I should print it or throw it into the fire. A similar *threat*, but more distinct, has been sent me by way of post-script to a most rude and insolent letter, coming evidently from one of the Berwick Smack statesmen, whose letter I will, however, publish, if he will send me, instead of the fictitious name of "ANTI CAPITOLINUS," his real name and place of abode. — The first of these letters I have inserted, because it contains what one defender, at least, of Mr. Whitbread's project has to say; but, I think it right here to observe, once for all, that, of all those, who choose to make use of threats to "print elsewhere, and shame the rogue," I shall shew my contempt by leaving them to execute their threats. If "ANTI-CAPITOLINUS" will send me, post paid, to No. 5. Panton Square, his abusive letter, leaving out the threats of publication elsewhere, I will publish it; otherwise I shall leave him to his other means of publication.——Before I enter upon my reply to the letter of SCOTO-BRITANNUS, which is the name taken by the Scotch correspondent above-mentioned, it may not be amiss to insert the preamble to Mr. Whitbread's bill, which preamble has given me, and all those who think with me, upon this subject, so much offence: "Whereas the *instruction* of youth tends "most materially to the promotion of morality and virtue, and to the formation of "good members of society, whereof we "have the most convincing proof, by long "experience, in that part of the United "Kingdom, called Scotland; and, it is expedient, that provision should be made "for the instruction of the children of the poor "of England and Wales; may it please your "Majesty, that it may be enacted, &c."—— Now, if this means any thing describeable, it means, that the poor of Scotland are more moral, more virtuous, and better members of society than the poor of England are; and this, I say, is false, and grossly insulting to the people of England.——The article, which I have referred to, at the beginning of this sheet, contains my reasons for this assertion, and also my reasons for objecting to Mr. Whitbread's project of parochial schools. Scoto-Britannus differs from me upon both points, as the reader will see, choosing, however, to invert the order, which I followed, and to attack first that which he regarded as hostile to his own country. Indeed, he has followed no order at all; and, really, one might well be excused from replying to any answer, wherein a confusion in the arrangement of the several points necessarily renders the reply four or five times as long as it otherwise might be.——I will follow my arrangement, and will, taking argument by argument, see how each has been answered by Scoto-Britannus.——I. I expressed my dislike to the assumption, that the *poverty* of the labouring people arose from their *vices*, and observed, that no position could be more convenient for those, who, from whatever motive, were desirous of supporting the taxing system. I added, that the paupers of England and Wales had increased threefold, since Pitt became minister; that, to

this argument of experience might be added the undeniable truth, that, if, by any system, no matter what it be called, the fruit of the labour of some be drained away to keep others without labour, the poverty of those who labour must thereby be increased. ——Scoto-Britannus says, that I have *admitted* the fact, that vice is the cause of poverty. This is not true in the way that he represents it. I have not admitted, but have positively denied, that the poverty complained of by Mr. Whitbread has arisen from the vices of the people; and have, in terms most distinct, ascribed it to the other natural and all-pervading cause, the increase of taxation.——In answer to this argument relative to the effects of the taxing system, Scoto-Britannus, first observes, that the taxes bear equally hard upon the people of both countries; then he *asserts*, that the labourers in Scotland are in most delightful condition. This is *his* argument of experience; but, between mine and his there is this little difference, that I, in stating the increase of paupers, refer to documents which have been laid before parliament, whereas he refers merely to his own observation, confined, in all probability, to a small part of Scotland; and, therefore, here his argument is at once demolished by my denying the fact upon which it rests, and, I think, I am warranted in so doing, when I am able to shew, that the Scotch labourers are, in part, fed from the fruit of the labour of Englishmen, sent to them in grants annually made by parliament. But, aware of the weakness of this ground, he resorts to reasons drawn from the nature of the case, and says, "that the English la- "bourer, if he chooses to be industrious "and œconomical, may make a very com- "fortable livelihood; and that his profits "are *not drained away by taxes*, because "his establishment and income are so small, "that they *do not come within the range* "*of the taxing system.*" Upon reading this, one might almost be led to hope, that this system, as established here, has not yet reached Scotland; but, as that would be too much to hope, we must conclude, either that the poor in Scotland wear no shoes, no shirts, no hats; that they use neither tea nor coffee nor sugar nor spirits nor beer nor candles nor soap; that, in short, they go naked by day, lay upon the bare ground by night, dig up their food with their snouts or catch it after the manner of the hawk or the fox, and that their drink is pure water; this we must conclude, or we must conclude that Scoto-Britannus, who writes in so dogmatical a style, who quotes Latin, and who, to shew his contempt of it, I suppose, does, in several instances, scorn to write English, has never reflected, or is incapable of reflecting with advantage, upon the operation and effects of the taxing system.——II. But, said I, supposing for argument's sake, that vice has greatly increased, amongst the poor, of late years, schools, books, magazines, newspapers, &c. have increased ten-fold since the fatal reign of Pitt began; how, then, can Mr. Whitbread expect to eradicate vice, and thereby reduce the number of paupers by adding about twelve thousand to the number of schools already existing? Scoto-Britannus, with his usual modesty, begins his answer to this argument by asserting, that it is *fallacious*; "for," says he, "the increase of the e publications *has not* "*proceeded from the extension of the art of* "*reading*, but from some of those, who "were able to read formerly, reading more "than they did; and from a very numer- "ous class, who could read formerly, now "using these publications, whereas they "never thought of them some years ago." He seems to have overlooked the great and glaring increase of *schools* in England and Wales, whence, I think, we may presume that there is a great increase of readers; and, indeed, for a writer seriously to contend, that the *readers have not increased*, does expose him to imminent danger of being set down for a person more intent upon contradiction than upon the discovery of truth. But, at any rate, *reading* has increased, the mass of reading has increased with the mass of vice; for, observe, it is he who contends that vice has increased, that being the very basis of the project; and, then, I repeat my question, if vice has increased with the increase of reading, how are we to hope, that vice will be diminished by a further increase of reading?——III. I said, that, if taught to read the Bible, the poor would not stop there; that they would read publications very well calculated to add to the stock of vice; and that, as to political matters, the little learned *must* derive injury from the works issuing from a press, under laws, by which a man may be put half to death for writing, or publishing, the truth. ——To this Scoto-Britannus gives no answer at all; but, in one part of his letter, he has the following observations: "It is "very plain, that, in a civilized period of "society, as we are, unless a habit of men- "tal amusement is acquired, the only enter- "tainment will consist in animal, and, "*consequently*, vicious gratification. Now, "from this *indubitable* principle, it *mani-* "*festly* follows, that, even the plough-

" man, unless he can read, so as to " amuse himself when his work is over, the " ale-house will be his resort, where he " brings himself and his family to beggary. " You *may say*, indeed, that his reading " will corrupt his principles, both moral and " political; but, *rely upon it*, his want of " reading will lead him farther astray. " Pimps and demagogues and hireling de- " claimers are now too numerous, too anx- " ious, and too successful in deluding igno- " rance. The peasant's time would, at " least, harmlessly be spent in reading the " most immoral and factious publications; " and, *I am fully convinced*, would not be " in such danger as if he were left in igno- " rance" (this is to say, *without reading them*). " A *taste*, and a sight, *of vice*, be- " fore the deceiver comes, is the best anti- " dote against it". Go, go, thou Scotch Philosopher! Keep thy pimping books, thy primmers of debauchery and blasphemy, amongst the lads and lassies of thy own country; fortify them against the deceiver by giving them a foretaste of vice; but, come not, I pray thee, on this side the Tweed! As to the ale-house, properly used, it is as good as the bake-house, or bacon-house. The Bible will tell your pupils, that wine was given by God " to *glad* men's heart"; and, they will readily conclude, that, those who cannot get wine for that purpose, may safely take beer, without any offence to him who made it and them. But, upon the supposition, that the poor man's heart should never, even for one moment, be cheered by liquor, and that he never ought to set his foot into an ale-house, what, let me ask, is so likely to lead him thither as *the news-paper*? And, where will you find an ale-house without one? Ask the landlord, why he takes the news-paper, he will tell you, that it attracts people to his house; and, in many cases, its attractions are much stronger than those of the liquor there drunk, thousands upon thousands of men having become sots through the attractions of these vehicles of novelty and falsehood.—The principle, that all *animal* amusements are *necessarily vicious*, though " indubitable" with this northern philosopher, is a little doubtful with me; and, indeed, if one may venture to express an opinion in opposition to that of a writer, who speaks in so authoritative a tone, I should think, that animal amusements, generally speaking, are the least likely of the two to engender vice; and, as to the ploughman, sitting down to read his good book, after his labour is done, the idea never could have found its way into the mind of any one who knew what a ploughman was. Take a thousand ploughmen, set them down to their good books, after their day's work is done, and, in less than ten minutes, the whole thousand will be asleep. Animal amusement is the only amusement that such men *can* enjoy. They are up long before the sun; and, in the evening of the day, if they are not engaged in bodily exercise, they must be asleep, and asleep they would be, though a torrent of the philosophy of Scoto-Britannus were pouring down upon their devoted heads.—I asked, whether, within these last twenty years, *liberty* had increased with the increase of schools? Scoto does not answer this question, but he drops in upon the subject thus: " Would not reading", says he, " render the poor more *upright*, by ena- " bling them the better to understand those " instructions, which every Sunday the " church affords them? Ignorance" (which is a *want of reading*, observe) " has ever " been the constant attendant of slavery " and bigotry; and, on this account, uni- " versal education" (that is *reading*), " as " it would add to the beauty, so it would " also add to the *security* of the *British* " *Constitution*".——This word *constitution* is a very fine word. Scoto does not say to the *security of person and property*; because, perhaps, he was aware, that I should ask him what improvement *that* had received from his system of parish schools in Scotland; and that I should have put a question or two about the powers of *a Lord Advocate*, when exercised by a man of " *an ardent* " *mind*", as Pitt called it. That Scoto, who is, clearly enough, a schoolmaster himself, should see great beauty in the British Constitution I am not at all surprised, especially when I recollect, that the appointment of Scotch Schoolmasters is perfectly a *political* affair, as it would, in all likelihood, very soon become in England. At the probable effect of reading the Bible I before hinted; and, I think, it must be clear to every man who attentively considers the matter, that such reading, if universal, could lead to nothing short of universal schism, which, at present, is prevented, only by the general want of what may be called *study* in reading it. Those, amongst *the mass* of the people, who read the Bible, read it because they are told it is their duty so to do. Having gone over the words, they think they have done their duty, without troubling themselves as to the sense. This is an evil, because they are apt to regard it as *a work of propitiation*, and the effect is much about the same as that produced by the Roman Catholic's bidding of his beads. The Bible is a book for learned historians and profound

thinkers to read. It is undeniably a book *of mysteries*, and is it, I ask any man who will speak sincerely, possible for *those who can barely read words*, to derive any real profit from the perusal of such a book? No: it is from the expositions and applications of the contents of the Bible, given by learned men, or by others who make use of those expositions and applications, that the people in general are to profit; these expositions and applications they will hear at Church and, for my part, I cannot perceive how the capacity of reading would tend to make them either more attentive or more docile.——But, if I doubt of the advantages of reading and writing, amongst those of the common people who are destined to labour in the fields, on the shop-board, or in the manufactory, I am quite certain, that, generally speaking, they are worse than useless in the army and the navy. Scoto has a bright idea about the "Sons of Mars and of "Neptune" rising, in virtue of their schooling, from the lowest to the highest ranks; but, besides the notoriety of the fact, *that this is not the case now*, is it not evident, that *all* men cannot so rise, that *all* soldiers and sailors cannot become officers, either commissioned or non-commissioned? And, this being the case, would not the "education", as it is called, of nine tenths of them tend to create discontent rather than a cheerful obedience? Upon this part of the subject I can speak with some little experience; and, I appeal to any commanding officer, who has continued long settled with his regiment, or to any captain of a man of war, whether your "scholars", as they are called, are not in general the worst of soldiers and sailors. The conceit makes them saucy; they take the lead in all matters of mischief; they are generally dirty and drunkards; and, the lash drives them to desert. So true it is, that "scholars" are not the best soldiers, that, though one third part, at least, of the men of every regiment can read and write, yet you will find, in every regiment, men chosen for non-commisssioned officers who can neither read nor write. Reading and writing and honesty and good behaviour are all wanted in a non-commissioned officer! but, as the two latter are absolutely necessary, the commander is frequently compelled to appoint men who can neither write nor read; though he has hundreds of "scholars" in his regiment or his ship; and, it is curious to observe, that the "scholars" become the clerks of the "ignorant" non-commisioned officers, make out their reports and accounts for them, saving them the trouble of merely scrawling their name. This practice is universal, throughout the army and the navy, and it is a striking instance of the superiority of intrinsic worth over acquired talent. The man of reading and writing is to be preferred, if he be equally good with his comrade in other respects; and the great convenience of his talents generally procures him a trial, before his comrade be thought of for promotion; but, in the end, the sober, cleanly, punctual, early-rising, vigilant, honest and unassuming man is sure to be preferred, because these qualities are indispensible, and because reading and writing can be dispensed with.——"But, *somebody* must read and write". Granted; and what I contend for, is, that the number will be quite large enough, if you leave the parents to their own taste and their own means. There will then be as many readers and writers as the state of things calls for; but, if you make *all* men readers and writers, you must produce an unnatural and disjointed state of things.——IV. I said, that the word *ignorance* was misapplied in using it as the opposite of book-learning. Scoto-Britannus, however, insists, that, though a labourer may be as clever as it be possible at all the branches of husbandry, still he is to be accused of ignorance, unless he can read in a book. What, Scoto, would you have him to read about? The lawyer reads his cases; the physician reads medicine; the chemist reads chemistry; the parson reads divinity; and Mr. Whitbread reads the political economy of the Edinburgh Reviewers. These all read of matters connected with their several professions; and, doubtless, they become wiser, or, at least, more deeply skilled in their professions, by reading. But, what reading could possibly render the labourer more skilled in his profession? The old story about the judge and the sailor is quite apt to our purpose here. "Not know the meaning of the "*implication*," said the judge, "what an "*ignorant* fellow you must be."—"Well," continued the sailor, after the interruption, "as I was saying, he took hold of the "*painter*."... "The *painter!*" interrupted the judge, "what's the painter?" —"Oh, lord!" exclaimed the sailor, "not know what the *painter* is? what an "*ignorant* man you must be!" If this story be true, the sailor, doubtless, was committed to jail; but, that did not make his conclusion more erroneous than that of the judge. According to the notion of Scoto-Britannus; a man may first become completely skilled in all the business of husbandry; he may next learn to fell and hew

timber, and convert the several woods of the coppices into hoops, staves and shingles; then he may take the corn into the mill and go through the several stages of making it into flour; next he may become a soldier, may learn all the laborious duties of that profession, marching, shooting, riding, sapping and mining; transferred from the army to the fleet, he may learn to hand, reef, and steer, to sound the sea, and to man the guns in battle; in the course of his life, he may see all the quarters and countries of the world, the manners of all the different nations, and may feel the effects of all the climates; and, yet, when he comes home, with his mind necessarily stored with ideas, of which that of his neighbour must be totally destitute, he is to be called *ignorant*, in comparison with that neighbour, if he cannot read in a book, and if that neighbour can read in a book. Such a notion never, surely, could have entered the mind of a man, whose trade it was not to teach reading, and who did not view what he calls education through the deceitful medium of self-interest. —— Having now replied to every thing which this writer has said in answer to what I offered respecting the poor-school project; and having, as I verily believe, given substantial reasons for the rejection of that project, I shall now proceed to reply to what my correspondent has said respecting the state of Scotland. And, here I must beg the reader to bear in mind, that my former observations were *provoked*; that the labourers of Scotland had been, in the preamble to an act of parliament, represented as better members of society than the labourers of England; and that herein was contained *a challenge*, on the part of Mr. Whitbread's instructors, against the people of England. A thousand instances of arrogance like this I have seen in Scotch publications, and have passed them over in silence as the effects of that *nationality*, for which the people of Scotland are so renowned, and which, though a fault, is certainly a fault upon the right side; but, when I found that this feeling was operating in a way to become the foundation of a law materially to alter the parochial laws and the manners of England, it was impossible to remain any longer silent. ——Scoto-Britannus begins by giving us a description of a Scotch labourer's dwelling, family, fare, and manners; and, I cannot positively swear that this description is false, because I have never been in Scotland; but, as he refers me to the testimony of those who have been there, I will tell him, that the description which I have received from such persons is nearly as follows: a cabbin built of mud and thatch, having no floor but the earth, having no window of glass, but a hole to let in light, stopped occasionally with a board; a hole through one end of the roof to let out the smoke, and a division by a hurdle, to separate the family from the cow, or pig, where either happens to be kept. The bed is made of heath, placed the stems downwards and cut off smooth at the top, the elasticity of which renders it less galling to the body. The whole family have neither shoes nor stockings, and the children neither hats nor caps. The utensils are wooden bowls, horn-spoons, and a kettle or two. There are none of those places near the dwelling, which English cleanliness and decency always take care to provide; but a dunghill opposite the door is the receptacle for filth of every description, while a spot of ground, denominated a "*cale yard*" is all you perceive of the nature of a garden. This is the description, which I have received, from persons, upon whose word I place reliance; and, though there are many exceptions therefrom, I am sincerely persuaded, that, as a general description, it is perfectly just. I am told, too, that in Edinburgh, that emporium of learning and of virtue, the lower classes of the people throw from their windows into the street all that we send away without offending any one of the senses; and that, if it be unhappily your lot to ascend their stair-cases, which are very lofty, you must take special care to tread precisely in the middle, each corner of each step being loaded with filth. The old sayings, too, about that tormenting disorder of the skin, which for the sake of Scoto-Britannus, shall here be nameless, seem to correspond with this account of a want of cleanliness in Scotland. When a term of reproach is taken up, it is generally much strained in its application; but, it seldom prevails to any extent, and for any length of time, if it has not *some* foundation in truth. I remember also, that, when Scotch recruits were brought up to Chatham Barracks, it was the *invariable* practice to send them to a particular ward in the *hospital*, there to be anointed and rendered clean, before they were permitted even to set their foot in the Barrack rooms. I never saw this precaution taken with respect to recruits of any other country; and, I am compelled to believe, that there was some solid reason for the distinction.——But, if it be really true, that the state of the labourer in Scotland is what Scoto has described it to be, how happens it, that we hear of no emigration to that country?

We hear of emigration *from* it, indeed, and of that we will speak by-and-by; but, how comes it, that we hear of no emigration *to it*; plenty and happiness being commodities which are, of all others, the surest to draw customers? The Picts' wall is surely not standing? No: that cannot be, because the Scotch emigrate in great numbers to England, that is to say, according to Scoto and Mr. Whitbread, from plenty and virtue to poverty and vice, a practice wholly at variance with the theory, except we suppose, that they who emigrate hither are all school-masters coming from motives of pure philanthropy, to teach us how we may obtain plenty and banish poverty and vice. —— Scoto-Britannus tells me, that there are as many Scotchmen as Europeans of all other nations in the West Indies, and more in Hindostan, and this he produces as a proof of the enterprize of his countrymen, owing, as he says, in great part, to their plan of education. I admit it all, without the least reserve; and, in order to convince me, that a similar plan of education is desirable for England, he has only to prove, that England would derive strength from the emigration of her most able-bodied sons, or that, remaining at home, slaves could, somehow or other, be found to work for them. But, he seems here to have forgotten, that Mr. Whitbread's intention was not to educate men for the East or West-Indies, not to educate them for East India collectors or West-India overseers, but for English labourers, upon whom he was for affixing badges. This remark of Scoto confirms, in a great degree, what I have said about the tendency of book education disinclining men to labour; for, while, as I before observed, we can be shewn no colony composed of Scotch labourers, we know of many composed, from their first settlement, of English, of Irish, and of Germans; and, it is notoriously true, that, of the American States, those only where the cultivation is carried on by slaves, have, for proprietors of the soil, any considerable number of Scotchmen, or the descendants of Scotchmen; whence comes the saying in America, that "Scotchmen make bad *soles* but "good *upper-leathers*;" and, as Mr. Whitbread's manufactory was professedly intended for soles only, the Scotch plan seems to have been the very worst that he could have adopted.—— My *two instances* of undeniable facts (see p. 336 and 337), have, as I anticipated, greatly puzzled the advocates of *Scotch example*. Scoto denies, however, that the criterion, founded upon the relative amount of the taxes, as compared with the relative population, of England and Scotland, is a fair one; for, says he, many of my countrymen, pay taxes in London. To be sure they do; but, will you attempt to persuade me, that it is from *Scotch labour* that they acquire the means of paying those taxes? *This* is the point to keep in view; for we are discussing, not whether the parish-school education tends to make good getters of money, but whther it tends to make good labourers, and to make a *country* productive.——As this is all that Scoto-Britannus has offered in answer to argument, founded on the relative amount of the taxes, compared with the population, I think I may leave that argument as it stood before.——As to the instance, founded on the fact of Scotch emigration to America, Scoto ascribes that emigration to Sir John Sinclair's scheme of moulding small farms into large ones; but, insists, at the same time, that emigration is a proof of *enterprize* and *industry*. Well, then, as ten times as many Irish emigrate, the Irish must be still *more enterprizing and industrious!* Be it so, for argument's sake; but, again, I say, that Mr. Whitbread's plan was not intended to prepare the people for the exercise of industry in foreign countries; but to make them good labourers *at home*.—— One observation of mine, and that the most important of all, Scoto Britannus has quite overlooked; and that was, that at the very time, that a law is proposed to be passed to educate the poor of England upon the Scotch plan, with a view of making them as moral, as industrious, and as happy as the poor of Scotland, large sums are annually granted out of the fruit of the labourers of England *expressly* to prevent the Scotch from emigrating, by *making work* for them at home. It is truly surprizing, that Scoto-Britannus should have overlooked so material a fact; because, without some very satisfactory reasons against it, we must conclude from this fact, that the "flourishing "state of Scotland," about which so much has been said, is a pure fiction; or that, from motives none of the best, the several sets of ministers have been guilty of partiality the most shameful. In the year 1806, there was granted, out of the taxes, of which Scotland pays *one seventeenth* part, 70,000 pounds to *make work* upon bridges and canals, in order to prevent the labourers from emigrating; and 17,000 pounds to *send food* to others of them. This is nearly a thirtieth part of the whole of the taxes that Scotland pays; and, observe, that these grants have been going on for years, and are likely to go on for years to come: Now, I should

like to see Mr. Malthus apply his principles to this practice of ours; or, to see the Edinburgh Reviewers with Mr. Whitbread in their rear, endeavouring to persuade us, that the labourers of a country, who cannot support themselves without aid from the fruit of English labour, are proper to beheld up as an example for English labourers. Nothing, surely, but folly bordering upon idiocy, urged on by importunity and impudence unparalleled, could have produced the insult, of which I complain, and which I should be ashamed of myself not to resent.—— When we, the lazy and vicious English, want bridges, roads, and canals, we are obliged to make them at our own private expence, and to *pay for acts of parliament* authorizing us so to do; but, the industrious, and virtuous Scotch are to be *paid out of the taxes*, that is to say, out of the fruit of Englishmen's labour for making these things for themselves, while others of them have, from the same source, food sent them to induce them to remain in their country; and to prevent a diminution in its population. Oh, wise system of political economy! A system much more closely connected with that of the Scotch *boroughs* (where, too, *virtue* is most conspicuous) than many persons seem to be aware.——But, Mr. Whitbread must have had knowledge of these grants; he could not possibly have been ignorant of them; and, ought he not, then, to have stopped until he could have reconciled them with the assertion contained in his preamble, before he had advanced that assertion? Was it for a projector of great alterations in the manners of the people; was it for a deep reformer of morals and dispositions; was it for a law-giver, whose ambition stopped at nothing short of a radical revolution in the public mind, to expose the very basis of his schemes to the hostility of facts such as these, here produced and applied by an obscure individual?——"Believe "me, Mr. Cobbett," says Scoto, in conclusion, "the Scotch are an industrious, an in- "genious, and an enterprizing people." I do believe it, Sir; I know it to be so; I am well acquainted with the talents and the virtues of great numbers of them, and I have always regarded the whole of them as an excellent people. I scarcely ever knew a Scotchman, whose word might not be safely relied upon; I have generally found them, in very trying times, bold, amongst the bitterest enemies, in defence of the character of their country. They are acute, prudent, sober, faithful; though in general, not adventrous, yet never cowards; and, though cold in their manners, kind in their natures. But, Sir, it is not their parish-schools and their politically appointed pedagogues that have made them thus. This was their character long before those schools were thought of; and, while my anxious wish is, that those schools may not adulterate that character, I shall use the utmost of my endeavours to prevent their example, in that respect, from being followed in that part of the kingdom, to which I more immediately belong.

Danish War.——If there be any thing, connected with the Copenhagen enterprize, which I see with pain, it is that great honours and rewards are, as is reported, to be bestowed upon the persons intrusted with the command of it. It was an enterprize requiring neither great skill nor bravery, and merely a very moderate share of discretion. To rank it, in point of honour, with the achievements of Lord Nelson or of Lord St. Vincent, would be like giving the Fox's brush to be worn by a man who had catched the poor animal at the mouth of his hole, when worried out by terriers. It is evident, that the *selection* of officers was peculiar; and, the rewarding of them, in the distinguished manner talked of, would certainly give rise to a suspicion, that will not operate much in favour of the motive. It was *morally certain* that the thing would succeed; and, if it was intended to reward the officers with high honours, such as had been distinguished for long and arduous services, both in the army and the navy, should have had the command.——I see, too, that *a new set of Commissioners* are to be appointed to take account of Danish ships and property. I hope this commission will not, like the famous *Dutch Commission*, become *perpetual*. The Dutch ships and property have, long ago, ceased to exist, as such; the Dutch are become subjects of a king of the Buonaparté race; we have paid the Stadtholder for all his losses and for his no-losses, and yet this Commission sits; sit, too, it did, observe, as quietly as ever, under the administration of the all-reforming Whigs! For this, amongst other things, the Whigs are justly punished. They took good care to touch no abuse; but let every one remain, hoping to turn them to the same account that their applauded predecessor had turned them. They set the wishes as well as the interests of the people at nought; they mocked their mortification; and now they are justly loaded with their contempt.

Buenos Ayres.——The following article, which has appeared in all the public prints, demands the immediate and earnest attention of the public: "The conduct "of the *Heroes of La Plata*, it is feared,

" will prove as detrimental to the mercan-
" tile interest of the country, as it has been
" universally felt to be disgraceful to our
" military character. Under that impres-
" sion, an application has been made to the
" Chancellor of the Exchequer, to ascertain
" whether government was disposed *to*
" *grant any accommodation to the mer-*
" *chants, who have made such large ship-*
" *ments to that settlement.* Mr. Perceval
" declined giving any answer, until a state-
" ment be laid before the Treasury, of the
" grounds upon which relief is solicited.
" Such a statement has accordingly been
" prepared and submitted to the considera-
" tion of government; and the merchants
" interested in it have received an answer to
" the following effect:—" That all the at-
" tention would be paid to the statement
" which the important nature of it, both in
" respect to the facts which it alleges, and
" the principle on which it proceeds, appear
" to require; but he *declined still to give*
" *any opinion* whatever at present upon any
" part of the case, to avoid raising expecta-
" tions which *possibly* the ultimate decision
" of government may disappoint."——This,
it will be seen, comes from a ministerial pa-
per; but, as to the sneer at the " *heroes* of
La Plata," I would ask the Morning Post, if
he has never heard of any other *hero* that was
beaten, and that made a *disgraceful capitula-*
tion? What! has he lived till now, to disco-
ver, that such events as this are " *disgrace-*
ful to our military character?" Oh, the
baseness, the incomparable baseness of these
prints? Is it, indeed, Mr. Whitbread, from
increasing the capacity of reading these, that
you expect to produce public good? That
you expect to improve the morals of the
people?——But, what attracted my atten-
tion, in this article, was the apparent *indeci-*
sion of the minister upon the subject of
" granting *accommodation*" to the Buenos
Ayres Speculators. I hope, the answer as-
cribed to him may be considered as a *refu-*
sal; for, if any attempt be made to grant the
request, it will be one of the most shameful
and unjust measures that ever was adopted;
because it will be nothing short of robbing
the people of England to make up for the
losses of those, who, if they had *gained*,
would have kept all the gain to themselves.
By " *accommodation*" they mean, *lending*
them money out of the taxes; that is to say,
giving them part of the taxes, as Pitt did,
secretly, to Boyd and Benfield. And, upon
what ground can they ask this, other than
that, upon which every unsuccessful canal or
road company might ask for accommoda-
tion? If this be granted, when or where
shall we stop? What set of merchants, or
what single merchant, might not ask for
" accommodation" upon the same ground?
Observe, too, that this accommodation, if
granted, like the arrears due from the East
India Company, and like the accommoda-
tion to the Grenada merchants and planters,
creates a new set of dependents upon the
ministry of the day, who can, whenever
they please, demand the repayment of the
loan; so here is another glorious source of
silent corruption. Let the public have their
eye upon it. The Morning Chronicle says,
" the accommodation may be *proper*
enough;" but, it has had a taste of the good
things; it belongs to *the regiment*; and one
must confess, that, as towards *the public*, the
whole of that honourable body do most har-
moniously agree. I think, however, that
the ministers will not make this scandalous
grant, though promised, beforehand and
uncalled for, the approbation of the Morning
Chronicle. The swords and heir-looms,
which the Lloyds' men (whom the cowardly
Whigs suffered to remain combined) gave to
Sir Home Popham and his associates, should
first be given back, and brought to the ham-
mer. It will be too scandalous to attempt a
grant of this kind!

POOR LAWS.

SIR,——I had formerly the honour of ad-
dressing you on the " Learned Languages,"
under the name of Scoto-Britannus; and I
find it now incumbent upon me to address
you again, on a subject far different, but
much more applicable to my title, and to the
country to which it and I myself belong. In
your last number you have inserted a letter
from a correspondent, on the " Internal State
of Ireland;" and from what you have said
in the same sheet, it is absolutely necessary
to make some communications to you on the
internal state of Scotland. You will excuse
me for saying, *because you have shewn your*
idea of Scotland to be so egregiously erro-
neous, that unless this letter or something
equivalent be published, by parts, in whole,
or at least in substance, you will evince your-
self to be no longer the dispassionate Cob-
bett; and, although, by profession, not per-
sonally, yet to be, in reality, nationally pre-
judiced, which is so much the more intoler-
able, and dangerous, and which will make
you appear, if not a party, at least a public
hireling.—Scotland, generally speaking, is,
and has, for some years, been in a very flou-
rishing condition. Erudition of all sorts,
arts, liberal and mechanical, agriculture and
commerce; and, in short, every advanta-
geous national or political concern, are ma-

king rapid and steady advancement. Notwithstanding the load of taxes, and the tedium of war, which now gaul the neck of Britain, wealth and refinement spread their fostering wings over the favoured mountains of Caledonia.—It is only, however, within these 20 years, since about the conclusion of the American war, that these happy times have blessed this northern climate. For some years before that period, Scotland may be said to have made some of these attainments; but, still, however, the mists which had arisen from the bustle of the union, and the heats of the two successive rebellions intercepted the rays of improvement. But now the peasant basks in the sunshine of prosperity and plenty, and the husbandman glories in the improvement of his crops and cattle. The education of the peasantry is one of the principal causes of this.—Every parish has a schoolmaster who can teach at least writing reading and arithmetic. These masters are appointed, and afforded a salary, and a free house by the heritors, or landholders of the parish; and with this, and their school-fees besides, together with the profits of a few boarders, whom many of them keep, they spend very happy lives. It is the universal practice, without a single exception, for every father of the lowest circumstances to send his children to be educated at the parish school, which he can do very cheaply, the fees being modified by the heritors. The consequence of this is, that every male, and nearly 3-4ths of the females, can at least, read, write, and cast accounts very dexterously. Every Scotchman can read, and actually does read, if possible to excess, that book, which our religion declares to be the standard of truth, and which unprejudiced, even antichristian philosophy must allow to be the most complete, most sound, and, at the same time, simplest system of morality which ever has, or, probably, ever will appear. Every Scotchman can read the history of his country, and while he does so, he is inspired with an indelible regard for the welfare of those liberties and possessions for which his warlike ancestors so long and so bravely fought. When one enters the habitation [whatever it may be called] of a Scotch peasant, instead of finding those "gardenless, floor-"less, and chimneyless cabins," [as you are pleased most erroneously to call them] all to the south of the Tay, one meets with nothing but a neat commodious small house, in many cases consisting of two apartments; there, placed around a heartsome *bleezing ingle*, one sees the happy master and mistress of the house, with upon an average not less than five fine healthy children. You are then placed in the *mucle chair*, and regaled with butter, cheese, and milk variously prepared for use, the productions of the excellent cow, which every *cottager* has, or, if you please, with the greater refinement of tea collations, all the tokens of hospitality and prosperity. Next, you are charmed with the alphabetical prattle of the children, while you cannot often but wonder at the philosophically sensible, and even very abstract conversation of the *goodman*: taking all together one cannot help exclaiming in the language of Virgil,

"O! fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint
"Agricolas! Quibus, ipsa, procul discordibus
"armis,
"Fundit humo facilem victum, justissima tellus!"

You may be apt to think, Mr. Cobbett, that this picture, drawn by *me*, is too flattering; but, I appeal to any of your Scotch acquaintance who is acquainted with the present real state of his country, if the colouring is brighter than the life. The English cottages may equal, but cannot surpass the greater part of the modern Scotch ones in neatness and convenience; but, it is to be recollected that Scotland is exposed to much greater severity of weather than England, and has, on that account, so much the more merit.—But, now, to make it the more appear, that the education of the lower orders is the principal cause of these things, I must, unwillingly, have recourse to some animadversions on your reasonings regarding Mr. Whitbread's bill.—I cannot, after impartial reflection, but agree with Mr. Whitbread, that "poverty arises from vice; and vice is propagated by want of education." You grant the first of these propositions; and I am astonished to see how in any way you can doubt the other. Besides many reasons for a want of education propagating vice, which for want of room I must now suppress; it is very plain, that in a civilised period of society, as we are, unless a habit of mental amusement is acquired, the only entertainment will consist in animal, and consequently, vicious gratifications, for which there are so many surrounding objects. Now, from this indubitable principle, it manifestly follows, that even the ploughman unless he can read, so as to amuse himself when his work is over, the alehouse will be his resort, where he becomes himself a beggar, and brings his family upon the poor's roll. You may say, indeed, that his reading will corrupt his principles both moral and political: but rely upon it, that his want of education will lead him farther astray. Pimps and demagogues, or, if you please, hireling

declaimers, are now too numerous, too anxious, and too successful in deluding ignorance. The peasants time would at least harmlessly be spent in reading [to suppose the worst] the most immoral and factious productions; and, I am fully convinced, would not be in such danger, as if he were left in ignorance, which is the disgrace and the blindfolder of mankind. A taste and a sight of vice before the deceiver comes is the best antidote against it. In the next place, were the peasantry obliged, as is the case in Scotland, to educate their children, the school fees would employ the surplus part of their income, which would otherwise have been squandered in idleness, debauchery, and vice. You reason indeed, [P. R. p. 331] with regard to England, where the poverty of the lower orders has for some years been much augmented, that "pamphlets, re-"views, magazines, newspapers, &c. have "encreased ten-fold;" and that, therefore, reading, and consequently education, must have also increased. There is, however, a fallacy in this argument. The increase of these publications has not proceeded from the extension of the art of reading, but from some of those who were able to read formerly, reading more than they did; and from others [which is a very numerous class] of those who could read formerly now using these publications, whereas they never thought of them some years ago. But, although you admit [P. R. p. 330] in an abstract point of view, that poverty arises from vice, and that, from a want of education; yet you argue that the poverty of the lower orders of England, proceeds from the "taxing system." In the first place, it is obvious that the taxes are equally severe in proportion upon the English and Scotch peasantry, yet the latter have been thriving, and are actually in the most flourishing state as I have described. To me it would appear that the peasantry are the only order of the community whom the taxes do not affect. The spirit of agriculture and commerce is, notwithstanding all the surrounding disadvantages, at present so brisk that labour is every where sought after. Every labourer, consequently, who chuses to be industrious and economical, may make a very comfortable livelihood: nor are his profits drained away by the taxes, because his establishment and income are so small that they do not come within the range of the "taxing system."—With regard to your ideas of the words ignorance and learning, [p. 331] I must beg leave to differ from you. Every man is supposed to be acquainted with that part of the business of life which falls within the sphere of his action. If he knows nothing more, if he is unpossessed of the power of reading and writing, which are the most compendious means of taking a glimpse of the general business of life, we correctly term him ignorant. The Californian, or the Otaheitan may be much more dexterous in every one of the acquirements of the most expert ploughman, yet none hesitate to call him both *ignorant* and *savage*. I cannot see why our letterless peasants, who might be better, are not much more deserving of these epithets. To me it appears, and I am sure would far less appear to Mr. Whitbread puzzling, to "suggest benefits that the pea-"santry might derive from an acquaintance "with letters." [p. 332] I have shewn already that it would keep them more sober, both by restraining themselves, and by depriving them of the means of vice in supporting the expence of their childrens education; and I may modestly ask, would it not make them more upright, in enabling them the better to understand those instructions which every Sunday the church affords them? With regard to Scotland, I am certain this question can be answered in the affirmative. Ignorance [in the sense I use it] has been the constant attendant of slavery and bigotry; and on this account universal education and learning, as it would add to the beauty, so it would also add to the security of the British constitution. "Men," as Mr. Whitbread, I think, justly observed, "might have risen in life had they been "taught reading and writing." Why, their reading or writing would lead them to the city, [as you think p. 332] it is impossible for me to perceive. A peasant who is conscious that he could neither write a letter to his master, nor keep an account, however skilled he may be in all the arts of husbandry, will have little emulation to improve himself, and far less to rise in life. It requires no great acuteness to observe besides, that the poor ought to be educated *solely for the advantage of the army and navy*. Our common peasantry supply the British sons of Mars and of Neptune; and when any of these, through real actual merit, are raised in rank, were they able to write and read, they would be capable to command their inferiors, and would add greatly to the glory and strength of the British arms, as tending to abolish that abominable practice of *purchasing*, which slights merit, and checks every laudable exertion.—The education of the poor is an abstract political subject; and must, therefore, be reasoned about on general documents. Your argument, therefore, [p. 334] founded on the particular case of

Scotch colonies in America is, if not irrelevant, very feeble. Colonies have often a different character from their mother state; and, what is to be observed, the Scots, at the time these colonies alluded to existed, had not sufficiently reaped the fruits of their plan of education. I deny that the comparative amount of the taxes of England and Scotland, is "a fair criterion whereby to judge "of their relative ingenuity, industry, and "enterprise." [p. 335] Besides other objections to this criterion, it is a very strong one; that a great part of the taxes which are paid in London, &c. which is the emporium of Scotland, as well as England, are paid by Scotchmen, whose enterprizing genius makes them resort there for the greater advancement of their trade, which would otherwise be all levied in Scotland. As a proof of the enterprize of my countrymen, it is a well known and undeniable fact, that there are infinitely more Scotchmen than Englishmen in the West Indies, in proportion; and, I have been told by a learned Doctor, who resided a number of years in Hindostan, and who is now a member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, that there are actually more Scotchmen than Englishmen in the East Indies.—The practice, in the North of Scotland, introduced in a great measure by Sir John Sinclair, [see the Ed. Farmer's Magazine] of converting a number of small farms into one large farm, and letting that to a South of Scotland farmer, was the cause of the emigration of which you have taken notice, [p. 336] as affording a proof of the want of industry and ingenuity in the Scotch peasantry: but, I think it would be easy to prove the contrary from this event, because, to go to a foreign and unknown land, where houses are to be built, and the land probably to be cleared of wood before it can be cultivated for subsistence, argues more ingenuity, industry, and enterprize than to remain at home, deprived of agricultural concerns, and of both conveniency and materials for practising a mechanical profession. The Scotch, at present, believe me, Mr. Cobbett, are an industrious, ingenious, and enterprizing people; and, after what has been said, I think it can hardly be doubted, or denied, that they owe these qualities, in a great measure, to their excellent plan of education, under the protection of the English constitution. Is it not probable then, à priori, that England would be benefited by something similar? To conclude, "a legisla- "tor occupied like the father of his country "with the happiness of his people, will "watch national education, to the end that "children may suck in with the milk, the "principles and maxims which may contri- "bute to the public good, and the prosperity "of individuals," which was the maxim of a politician, whose principles no one can controvert, and which is humbly recommended to your attentive and dispassionate consideration, by your constant reader and well wisher.——SCOTO-BRITANNUS.

DOMINION OF THE SEAS.

SIR,——Upon that most important subject, the Dominion of the Seas, a correspondent has, in the last number of your Register, contended, that "occupancy, or *first* possession, confers right;" but, it does not apppear to me, that this proposition is laid down with sufficient precision; for we are left to conjecture to *what* it is that a right is conferred by occupancy, or first possession. Waving, however, for the present, the consideration of what the subject of the right may be, the doctrine, it seems, is, that the right itself may consist in occupancy, or in first possession; but, Sir, every one must see, that what is in the *present* occupation, or possession, of one man, may have been *first* possessed by another; so that two claimants thus situated would, upon resorting to your correspondent's rule, be, I think, somewhat puzzled to discover to which of them the right would be awarded; although they might exert to the utmost those endowments which, according to your correspondent, are possessed in the same high perfection since the fall of Adam as before; that is to say, "reason to see good from evil, and *to do* justice and *avoid* injustice."—Presuming, therefore, that occupancy, or *present* possession, which signifies the same thing, is meant, let us endeavour to ascertain what is the subject of the right which such occupancy is supposed to confer; and as the gentleman, in elucidating his doctrine, immediately observes, that the Creator "gave to man dominion over the sea and earth," and that the reason with which he was endowed shews that "it is just for man to enjoy those gifts," I am, I presume, entitled to say to him, upon your own ground then, occupancy, or actual possession, gives to us, who are now in possession of the Dominion of the Seas, a right to such dominion, and to a separate and exclusive enjoyment of such dominion, too; for you say yourself that it is "on this foundation that all separate and exclusive enjoyment of property is erected." But, your correspondent comes forward avowedly as being hostile to that conclusion which is the fair result of his own premises; and he

must therefore *mean* something different from what his own remarks, in the outset of his communication, import; and, indeed, before one gets through the whole, it is sufficiently perceptible that HE means the reverse to what his former observations mean; for after having finished his argument, he inquires if it is not proved that "those vessels which are on the sea acquire a temporary right to that part of it which they occupy, and that it is unjust to deprive them or molest them in the enjoyment of it?" This argument, however, not having had the effect, even in the slightest degree, of reconciling me to the doctrine, that we have not a right to the Dominion of the Sea, permit me to offer to your readers some comments upon the observations which your correspondent has made with a view to its support.—His argument, then, Sir, is, it seems, that the Omnipotent Being gave to man "dominion over the sea and earth," and that the reason with which his Creator endowed him shews that it is "occupancy which confers right," and to be sure, Sir, in the primitive condition of mankind, when all was in common, and the spontaneous productions of the earth profusely afforded the means of subsistence, notions of temporary right only, and not of permanent ownership in any determined spots, would be imbibed—a *right* to exclusive possession, which would cease when the *act* of possession ceased. But, with what consistency can the notions which were entertained by the itinerant tribes of old, be, in the present state of the world, twisted into any thing at all resembling argument to prove that we have not a right to the Dominion of the Seas? Your correspondent, Sir, has already enabled us to decide with tolerable accuracy: but he shall shew us more distinctly—"On what other ground," he asks, "can it be supported, that one man should be entitled solely to possess this or that portion of land, but that he *derived* it from the *first* man who had the good fortune to gain possession of it?" Now, can any thing be more consistent? The right of the possessor does not now, in this stage of the gentleman's argument, consist in the individual's own actual occupancy of the land, but because he derived it from the *first* possessor. How the first possessor could transmit to others, that right, which it stands confessed on all hands endured no longer than his own *actual* possession, your correspondent has not discovered to us; nor will I distress my brain by any attempt to guess. The answer to the question, however, is, that the title of an individual to any particular piece of land, arises, not from its having been awarded to him or his ancestors, by the dictates of natural reason, but, by the law of the country in which he lives. It would, indeed, be rather a difficult task to account for the right (for instance) of the eldest son to the inheritance of his father, in exclusion of all his brothers and sisters, upon any principle of natural reason and justice. But your correspondent fancies that he sees something applicable to the point in dispute in the case of an estate granted to John for the life of Thomas, where Thomas survives John. Here, the law of England not having provided for such a contingency, by bestowing the right upon any particular person, he who first gets possession of it after the death of John will be entitled to retain it until the death of Thomas; but not because the law of nature, dictated by natural reason, awards it to him—for the right which he conferred was to the possession so long as the occupant was disposed to keep it, which might be after the death of Thomas—but because the law of England did not allow of any person being turned out of possession, unless some other person could make it appear that he was by law entitled to it; which in this anomalous case could not be done. Let it, however, for the sake of the argument, be admitted, that the case of occupancy just now spoken of, and the temporary possession of a person in a theatre, or of a ship in a dock or river, to the particular seat or spot occupied, bears some resemblance—or, if your correspondent pleases, a complete analogy—to ancient occupancy; how will that serve him? What of argument is there in it to prove that we are not entitled to the Dominion of the Seas, we having fought for and acquired that dominion, and that dominion being, moreover, essential to our security? Absolutely nothing. If the argument be that dominion over the sea was the gift of God to all mankind, and therefore no nation in particular can justify the claim of absolute dominion over any defined portion of it, the short answer to it, is, that dominion over the earth was equally the gift of God to mankind in general, and that upon the principle upon which he contends against out dominion of the sea, Englishmen can have no better right to this island than the inhabitants of any other nation. If he tells me that we have acquired this country, and are entitled because we have continued to maintain the possession of it; I shall tell him in return, that we have acquired the dominion of the sea, and have never *as yet* abandoned that

dominion. I say "as yet," Mr. Cobbett, for God knows how soon the fine-spun conceits of natural equity, which certain men in a certain quarter (who *call themselves* Englishmen, and Whigs, and patriots forsooth, are known to entertain, may be enabled to work the destruction of this firmest bulwark of our country's honour! Returning to your correspondent, it is to be observed, that he has not advanced any thing at all in the way of elucidation, which is, in the least degree, to the purpose; for in all the cases which he has stated (except that of the fisherman, which follows the principal question, and is governed by it) if the alleged right be infringed, there is a superior human power to punish such infringement, viz. the law of the country. But, suppose that when all things were in common, two individuals, or two tribes, were equally desirous of possessing any particular unoccupied spot or territory, and that they both arrive to take possession at the same time, natural reason would not dictate that it belonged to one of them rather than to the other; and there is no established law, in such a state, to be appealed to, or to which either would be bound to submit. What does the writer suppose would decide the point but FORCE. A nation is made up of a number of single families, united, with a view to their common protection and security, against other combinations of individuals, forming other nations. Well, then, suppose any particular nation to occupy a small island, which, by reason of its population being inferior in number, would be in danger of being over-run by more populous nations, unless it could preserve the Dominion of the Seas by which it is encircled; and the case supposed is not one merely fictitious, for it is the case of both Great Britain and Ireland at this day.—Is there a man living, and possessing at the same time a sane mind and an uncorrupt heart, who can either doubt our right to preserve that dominion, in which consists our own safeguard, or be so very lukewarm in the cause of his country, as to be willing to abandon it? Most truly is it said, in the motto to your last number, that "the sovereignty of the seas is the true defence of this kingdom;" and I do, Mr. Cobbett, most earnestly hope, that you will not cease to ring that tocsin in the ears of the dozing and besotted part of the community, that they may, in common with their more vigilant and reflecting fellow citizens, be roused to a sense and perception of that imminent peril which now threatens the honour of the nation, nay her very existence as an independent state and which will continue to lower; so long as the Sovereignty of the Seas shall cease to be maintained with the same zeal and spirit by which it was originally acquired. Men may prattle about the rights of nations, and may iterate the crude hypotheses of the different theoretic writers upon those rights; bnt they will, I believe, find their noddles sadly perplexed to assign any solid ground or reason, why, at the call of other nations leagued together, any particular one ought to abandon that dominion in which its own protection against those very nations themselves manifestly consists.——I am, Sir, your well-wisher, WROC.——*Lincoln's Inn, September* 21.

"DOMINION OF THE SEAS," AND "EXPATRIATION OF BRITISH SUBJECTS."

SIR,——I perceive in your last week's Register, the letters of two gentlemen 'learned in the law;' the one addressed to you on the "Dominion of the Seas," and the other on the "Expatriation of British Subjects:" the first gentleman favouring us with an illustration of the *practical law of occupancy* soon after the Deluge; and the second, less partial of antiquity, contenting himself only with some copious fragments from a great luminary of the law in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Now, Mr. Cobbett, though I feel extremely grateful for all legal lucubrations, and have considerable respect for those gentlemen who are schooled in forensic learning, yet, I shall in this instance, beg to enter my protest against both their opinions; particularly the author of the latter letter, whose principles I not only dissent from, but whose conduct in publicly asserting them, has my full measure of reprobation.—"DOMINION OF THE SEAS." As this subject necessarily embraces the consideration of the "Law of Nations," it will be of some utility to consider, what that selfsame thing is, which falls under that appellation. It has been, I think, asserted by you, Mr. Cobbett, that that law must be nugatory which no tribunal can enforce or punish for non-acquiescence; to that proposition I cannot exactly concede. A law is a rule of action; and I apprehend a conscientious man may lay down for himself a rule of conduct, from which he will not deviate, though there should be no tribunal that could enforce his obedience, or even censure his aberration. I am of opinion, therefore, that in civilised society, there may be laws for whose disobedience no penalties can attach, and yet that they are far from nugatory. The social or moral duties of man, are laws, for instance, which the upright member of

civilised society will feel it an imperious duty to observe, however he *might* neglect them with impunity. What is termed the *Law of Nations then, I look upon, to be such rules as wise and just men have considered most conducive to the integrity and prosperity of nations, having for its basis, that great principle of self preservation, which the Lawgiver of the Universe, has for the wisest of purposes, implanted in the whole animal creation.* The consideration of what is just or unjust as between man and man, has by analogy, led such authors as Grotius, Puffendorff, Vattel, and others, to consider what is the duty, or rather, what line of conduct ought to be observed between one state or society and another, and such rules as they have judged equitable between nation and nation, and most likely to preserve the integrity of each, they have detailed under the appellation of the Law of Nations. With respect to the tribunal which must enforce the observance of these rules, the *interest* of the *whole* creates such tribunal, by producing a confederacy of the different states for that purpose. If in society, it would be dangerous to its welfare, to permit one member to be refractory with impunity, so among states, it would equally endanger their existence, if one were permitted to act contrary to the policy of the whole. Self preservation then, that great cement of society, would, so long as the different powers *were pretty well balanced*, have enforced an observance to these rules or laws; but when once a power like France became capable of violating those rules, without the possibility of punishment, I admit with you, Mr. Cobbett, that the law of nations was from that moment dissolved, and that the states of Europe must be considered as no longer called upon to act upon that system, which there is *no balance of power* to maintain against violation. Thus much for the Law of Nations.—Now, your correspondent contends that "occupancy or first possession confers right," in opposition to your principle, "that force alone confers right." Now, it occurs to me, that "*right*" in both propositions is improperly used; I neither think that occupancy confers right, nor that force confers it. It seems to me, that all that can be advanced is, *that occupancy gives an accidental advantage, which force alone must maintain*; but that neither occupancy nor force, have any thing to do with right. Suppose an association of men emigrating to South America, and that while wandering there, they should find a considerable territory uninhabited, of which they take possession, and that the spot so possessed, is in a state of cultivation to afford more than sufficient means of subsistence for three times the number of settlers; what right, let me ask, can such settlers have to refuse to an half-starved traveller the liberty of supporting himself by such surplus produce, or of adopting a part of that spot for his local habitation? If right be a virtue, and synonymous with justice and equity, which I have always considered it, I can discover none in the instance I have put. What! is accident to be said to confer a right in one man to starve another? Such an idea is revolting to the judgment. All this imaginary right then, resolves itself in this; that when accident has placed me in a more fortunate situation than my neighbour, *policy* dictates, that I should use my best exertions to preserve my post against his and other aggressions. How absurd it is to suppose that the navigator who happens to discover an island in some hitherto unknown portion of the sea, sufficient for the support of a multitude of inhabitants, should by landing a few seamen upon it, thereby become possessed of the *right* of maintaining it against all the world. Having had the advantage of finding this uninhabited spot, if he can pursue the advantage, and prevent others from possessing themselves of it, it *may* be very well; but, to talk of a right, as if it were a divine right, which it would be unjust and impious to deprive him of, is perfectly farcical. The practice of nations fortifies this opinion. When a Portuguese discovered the Brazils, what did Portugal do? Merely inform the other European powers, that by the discovery they had the right; and to that they all assent? No! She sends out a force to maintain the advantage which accident has given her; colonizes the place, and fortifies it with garrisons, and other means of defence; but, if it were an acknowledged right, and so recognized by all civilized nations, such precautions would have been superfluous, and merely an insult to the other powers. The principle of the Dominion of the Seas comes then, merely to this; that as from accidental circumstances we have become the occupiers of this island, and that we tolerably well approve the spot, common prudence dictates that we should adopt the best and safest mode of preserving it; and as Buonaparté's immense territorial acquisitions are such, that we are in imminent danger of being overwhelmed by his troops if he had any means of transporting them, *we are urged by every ray of* REASON *and* POLICY *to maintain the Dominion of the Seas*; and every argument to the contrary seems to droop under the pressure of its own folly. Thus much for

the Dominion of the Seas ——"EXPATRIATION OF BRITISH SUBJECTS." The writer upon this subject has advanced a doctrine, that *may* suit the policy of some Englishman having a considerable property in the American funds; but, that it is a doctrine either consistent with the safety of any nation, or compatible with the judgment that the most superficial consideration affords, is, what I must be permitted to deny. A Frenchman in defence of revolutionary principles, in a revolutionary age, has advanced an absurd opinion which your correspondent has given us, and which is in substance this, "That a citizen, as an inhabitant of the world," (I cannot help observing by the way, that this chimerical Frenchman is an enemy to the idea of occupancy conferring a right, as upon that principle, it would be difficult to make out that every citizen is an inhabitant of the world,) "preserves a sort of natural liberty "to renounce his allegiance to his king and "country when he pleases, and to become "the adopted citizen of another with equal "facility; without which liberty man would "be really a slave;" that is, that when a man has been reaping for years all the benefits and privileges which the laws of the country in which he has resided has afforded him, and after he has realised a pretty large fortune, (the emoluments of some situation that have been paid out of the hard earnings of the people), he is to be at liberty to ship off the property to some foreign country, and return when he pleases afterwards, with a band of ruffians, to plunder us of our property and cut our throats. Now, this doctrine, says your correspondent S. V. is "certainly consonant to reason," and why it should not be adopted generally, and the spirit of it incorporated with the Law of Nations, he cannot conceive. Is it possible, Mr. Cobbett, for the most uncivilized wretch, or the most licentious of libertines, to promulgate a doctrine more repugnant to integrity, gratitude, and humanity than this? Were there no other memorial, characteristic of a Frenchman's disposition, this alone would indelibly stamp the truth of Voltaire's description of his countrymen, "that in "their exterior they are monkies, and in "their hearts tigers." In opposition to this Frenchman's doctrine, we have that of Sir E. Coke, that "no man can divest himself "of his allegiance to the country in which "he is born." S. V. who has given us this as well as the former quotation, observes, that he finds upon investigation, that it was only a dictum of Sir E. Coke's. What is the doctrine, let me ask, of the Frenchman, Picquet; is that any thing more than a dictum? God forbid that it should! If there be no black letter of the law, by which a Briton's incapacity of expatriating himself is laid down, it is, that the understanding of every man must have rendered it unnecessary. Only imagine, Sir, the case of a temporary dissatisfaction prevailing in a nation, and that inflamed with the intrigues of a country who has her destruction in view, and that every inhabitant was permitted to expatriate himself at pleasure, and shake off his allegiance; what is to become of the country in such a crisis? The fact is, that no reasonable man, unconnected with the interests of a foreign country, and having the welfare of his own nearest his heart, can for one moment entertain a doubt of the impropriety of such doctrine as that insisted upon by S. V. The only authority of S. V. (if it be not misusing the term when applying it to M. Pecquet) is the opinion of that French revolutionist, the foundation of whose opinion as stated by himself, is an insidious sophism; he says, unless a subject can shake off his allegiance he is really a slave. Why, no doubt every citizen of a country is subservient to the laws of that country; all governments being public compacts to which each inhabitant is a member; and as far as such compact restrains the natural liberty of the member, he is so far dispossessed of his freedom; but, then it is to be considered, that he has exchanged that freedom for some supposed equivalent. Universal freedom is inconsistent with political society. For the government of every society, however small, there must be laws, and in proportion as each member of the society is affected by those laws, so far he is deprived of his natural liberty; but whether that is a situation which the understanding contemplates when speaking of slavery, I leave to the judgment of the impartial reader. I presume, Mr. Cobbett, that your only object for inserting the letter of your expatriating correspondent, was to expose to your readers the danger of listening to the subtleties of those gentlemen who are so prone on all occasions to deprecate an American war, and to abuse this nation for every exertion in favour of her independence; if so, I agree with you, Sir, that the letter of S. V. has been peculiarly fitted for the purpose; though when I call to my mind the observation of that same Lord Coke, who says, "*interdum fucata falsitas in multis est probabilios, et sæpe rationibus vincit nudam veritatem*," I almost question the philosophy which has yielded to its publication.

CANDIDUS.

Lincoln's Inn, Sept. 22.

DOMESTIC OFFICIAL PAPERS.

BUENOS AYRES.——*From the London Gazette Extraordinary, dated Downing street, September* 12, 1807.

(Continued from p. 473.*)*

Abstract of Ordnance of Stores, captured from the Enemy in the Suburbs and City of Buenos Ayres, on the 2d and 5th of July, 1807.

43 Garrison and field pieces of different calibres, and mounted on travelling carriages. —About 25,000 round shot for field pieces, of various calibres; and about 1000 shells for mortars of various natures; and an arsenal, containing every description of ammunition and military stores; of which a return will be given as soon as possible.

(Signed) AUG. S. FRAZER, Capt. Horse Artillery, Commanding.

To his Exc. Lieut Gen. Whitelocke, Commander of the Forces.

Admiralty Office, Sept. 12, 1807.

Dispatches, of which the following are copies and extracts, have this day been received at this office from Rear Admiral Murray, addressed to William Marsden, Esq.

Nereide, off Barragon, June 30, 1807.

Sir,——I did myself the honour of informing you, by the last opportunity which sailed from Monte Video, of my proceeding from St. Helena until my arrival off Monte Video with the squadron and transports under my orders, a duplicate of which letter I now transmit.—Rear Admiral Stirling had made every necessary arrangement for the intended expedition before my arrival; it being necessary on account of the shoals in the river, that the line of battle ships should remain at anchor off Monte Video, as well as for the protection of that place, I directed Admiral Stirling to remain with them.—On the 17th inst. the second division of troops, consisting of all those who had come out with Gen. Craufurd, being ready to proceed to Colonia, where Gen. Whitelocke wished the whole to be assembled, Capt. Prevost, in his Majesty's ship Saracen, taking with him the Encounter gun brig and Paz schooner, sailed with the transports.——On the 18th, 213 marines of the squadron were landed at Monte Video, by request of the General, to strengthen the garrison. I likewise ordered 440 seamen to be ready to land, under the command of Captains Rowley, Prevost, and Joyce, with a proportion of officers to assist in working the artillery, to go up in the frigates, and Capt. Bayntun to proceed up the North Channel to Colonia, in the Haughty gun brig, with 6 gun boats, (Spanish prizes captured at Monte Video;) the Medusa, Nereide, and Thisbe to receive the seamen intended to land, and 3 boats from each of the line of battle ships.—On the 21st, the wind moderating, I shifted my flag to the Nereide, and Gen. Whitelocke did me the honour of accompanying me; and having directed Capt. Bouverie, in the Medusa, and Capt. Shepheard, in the Thisbe, to proceed with the Rolla and Olympia, and the last division of the troops, at noon weighed and stood to the southward, where we anchored in three fathom water.——On the 24th we anchored between Ensinada de Barragon and the northern shore, the winds and weather having prevented our getting to the westward of the Oltez Bank before. The General and myself finding time would be lost by going with this division to Colonia, sent for the troops to join at this anchorage; Gen. Gower went for them, with orders from Gen. Whitelocke to evacuate Colonia, if he thought it necessary; Colonia was accordingly evacuated.——On the 27th the troops from Colonia joined, with the Fly, Pheasant, Haughty, and the gun boats. I ordered the Paz up the river, with directions to the Staunch and Protector gun brigs to join me.—The transports having the troops and artillery on board, being in three divisions, I directed Capt. Thompson, in the Fly, who had made himself acquainted with the river, and particularly the place intended for landing, which was near Barragon, to lead the first division, having with him the Dolores schooner and 4 gun boats; Capt. Palmer, in the Pheasant, to lead the second division, with the Haughty and 2 gun boats; and Capt. Prevost, in the Saracen, to bring up the rear of the third division; Captains Bayntum and Corbet to superintend the landing of the troops.—At day light on the 28th, the wind being favourable, I made the signal to the Fly to weigh with the first division, and immediately after a general signal to weigh, having ordered the Rolla to be placed on the west end of the bank, as a guide to the ships to join. I shifted my flag to the Flying Fish, and Gen. Whitelocke went in with me. As soon as the first division of transports anchored, I made the signal to get into the boats, and immediately afterwards to put off.——Soon after 9 A. M. the first boats, with Brig. Gen. Craufurd's division, landed about a mile to westward of the fort, from which the enemy had some time before withdrawn their guns.

(To be continued.)

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